



**Call for Papers
International Conference
Under-Representation, Direct Democracy and Deliberation: Mapping
Contemporary Challenges
Ljubljana, 7-8 September 2021**

Representative democracy has been under intense scrutiny in the last two decades for its shortcomings. The models and practices of direct and deliberative democracy were seen as complements that could improve the quality of decision-making. The number of referendums flourished around the world and covered diverse topics. Citizen assemblies and participatory budgeting practices gained momentum and addressed several pressing problems of communities at local and national level such as climate change or constitution making. In spite of all these developments, direct and deliberative democracy were also subject to criticism due to their inefficiency, high costs, poor policy outcomes, limited legitimacy or exclusion of particular segments of society. Related to the latter, these alternative models and practices of democracy do not appear to address the problem of under-representation that characterizes many contemporary decision-making processes.

As such, several elements remain unclear: how elections, referendums or deliberative practices can include the under-represented groups; how many citizens and who can get involved in decisions; what form and aims of representative, direct and deliberative democracy can ensure the effective presence of under-represented groups in decisions; what are the appropriate settings to ensure an inclusive engagement of citizens; and how can dialogue and reason accommodate the emotionality of participants.

This conference aims to bring together works addressing, but not limited to, any of these challenges. The event will gather a group of 15-20 researchers working on these topics in order to facilitate the knowledge sharing and a better understanding of current events. The organizers strive for a balance between established academics, early career scholars (PhD candidates may also apply) and practitioners. We encourage theoretical, empirical or methodological papers related to representative democracy, direct democracy or deliberative practices or experiments.

Depending on the quality, and scope of works, the organizers have in mind either a special issue in an international peer-reviewed journal or an edited volume with a high-profile publisher.

Venue, application procedure and costs

This is intended as a face-to-face event that meets the safety standards related to the COVID-19 pandemics. Slovenia has declared the end of the epidemic as of 15 June 2021. Most EU countries and those from Western Balkans are on the green list of countries for Slovenia – details are available [here](#). Guests from all countries are required to comply with the recovered-vaccinated-tested requirements. Subject to compliance with these requirements, face masks are not mandatory for participants in indoor conference activity.

Authors should fill in the application form (available [here](#)) until **30 July 2021** (applications received after deadline will not be reviewed). There is no conference fee. The organizers will cover the travel costs, accommodation and meals for the entire duration of the conference. In case of co-authored works, the organizers will cover the costs for one author.